

congregation from Detroit's Colored Society under the leadership of Rev. Gee C. Booth on November 2, 1871, to serve as a safe harbor for newly freed slaves in Detroit. Rev. C.H. Ward served as the first pastor for 25 years. Three pastors from Ebenezer were elected to the office of Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church—Bishop George W. Baber served as pastor from 1933 until he was elected in 1944; Bishop Hubert Robison served as pastor from 1955 until he was elected in 1964; and Bishop Robert Thomas, Jr. served as pastor from 1972 until 1988. More recently, Rev. Robert L. Phillips, who served as pastor from 1991 until 1997, became presiding elder of the north district of the Michigan Annual Conference in 1997.

Throughout its history, Ebenezer served as an institution fully engaged in the fight for civil and human rights. Ebenezer has also worked with the community to make Detroit a better city through outreach ministries, community involvement and financial investments. In 1901, the church provided financial assistance to Henry Ford when he approached Ebenezer for support of endeavors to develop his automobile company. During the Depression, the church established an employment bureau and relief agency for families in need, and during WWII the congregation housed soldiers in the dorms of the former church building. Because of this rich history, in 2003, Ebenezer African Methodist Episcopal Church was designated a historical site by the Detroit Historical Commission.

Today, Ebenezer strives to continue this rich history through a variety of ministries, including programs for young adults and the homeless, as well as substance abuse and prison ministries. Ebenezer African Methodist Episcopal Church continues to stand as a "stone of help" under the leadership of Rev. Dr. H. Michael Lemmons. As the sixth oldest Black congregation in Detroit with members from four or more generations, Ebenezer is full of memories of great historical moments and faith that there are many more to come.

I know my Senate colleagues will join me in congratulating Ebenezer African Methodist Episcopal Church and wish its members, volunteers and ministerial staff continued success as they celebrate their 135th anniversary. ●

#### RECOGNIZING THE THUNDERCHICKENS

● Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I would like to congratulate the ThunderChickens on winning the 2006 FIRST Robotics Competition. This is a tremendous accomplishment, and I am delighted to recognize the impressive result of their hard work, dedication, and commitment.

The For Inspiration and Recognition in Science and Technology, FIRST, program provides aspiring engineers with an opportunity to develop and

showcase their talents by designing and implementing original robotic designs. Teams work together to build individual robots and compete against high school participants across the country. In total, 1,130 teams competed in the 2006 FIRST National Championship in Atlanta, GA.

I am proud to have this opportunity to honor the ThunderChickens, a metro-Detroit based engineering team made up of 38 high school students. Great skill, creativity, and originality went into their highly competitive robotic design. I would like to individually honor each member of the ThunderChickens and their mentors at the Utica Center for Mathematics, Science, and Technology. The members of the 2006 ThunderChickens include Michael DelBene, Jessica Zavadil, Shannon Willaert, Gregory Petty, Annette Palazzolo, Jacob Miller, Joseph Guzzardo, Sara Craun, Nina Fabian, Kyle Yaxley, Stephanie Hasty, Sala Sadaps, Steven Perry, Joshua Bails, Brian Turoski, Irene Zhu, James Courtois, Tony Kraus, Michael Harrison, Ryan Boyle, Brett Ankawi, Michael Lee, Salvatore Mattered, Joseph Scharnitzke, Anthony Schuller, Michael Ross, Ashley VanMaldeghem, Shayna Kunz, David Orban, Paul Szymanski, Andrew Fonk, Gregory Lau, Aaron Vedolich, Brian Lademan, Mihai Bulic, Heather Hampton, Ed Lionte, and Chad Thornbro. Their teacher mentors include Ron Arscheene, Anita Stafford, Mike Attan, and Janet Kent. Their engineering mentors include Paul Copioli, Ed Debler, Bob Korson, Mike Copioli, Mike Beem, Jim Yaxley, Rick Thornbro, Omar Zrien and Bill Baedke.

This championship is a testament to and the result of many, many hours of hard work and perseverance. While the immediate result of their work is impressive, I look forward to the bright futures that are ahead of these students. They have established a solid foundation on which to develop their interest in the field of engineering. They have also gained invaluable, hands-on experience.

Once again, I would like to congratulate the ThunderChickens on their remarkable 2006 First Robotics Competition National Championship. ●

#### TRIBUTE TO VIRGINIA SCOTT THOMAS

● Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. President, today, I honor an important Floridian and a proud American. Virginia Scott Thomas was a loving wife and mother, a passionate volunteer, and a trailblazer for women in Republican politics—I am very thankful that she was a constituent of mine. Sadly, she died this past month—but her legacy of hard work and dedication to good lives on.

Virginia Thomas should be commended for the work she put into creating the Bay County Republican Women's Club. As part of her volunteer

work for the Republican Party, Virginia Thomas opened her home to numerous GOP candidates—many of them to kick off their campaigns. Her energy and hospitality were well known, and Republicans from Ronald Reagan to Charlie Crist had the pleasure of being welcomed into her home. Candidates always spoke about their ideas and vision in front of her now-famous raised fireplace hearth and her warm hospitality made her many friends.

Before calling Florida home, Virginia Thomas, a Birmingham, AL, native, made history in her State. In 1943, she joined and became part of the first group of women Marines in the State of Alabama. She completed basic training in both South Carolina and Georgia and was then sent to the U.S. Marine Corps base in El Centro, CA, to serve as a supply officer. There in California, she met her future husband, Marine L.E. "Tommy" Thomas, and after the war ended, they headed for Birmingham. Eventually, she and her family moved to Florida, where Virginia Thomas became very active in their community.

Virginia Thomas will not be forgotten by the generations of Floridians that came to know her and her lively spirit. And because of her volunteerism and good work throughout more than 40 years in the Bay County area, she will be remembered long into the future. We will miss this good Floridian. Yet we know that her legacy will be carried on by her family and friends. The good works of Virginia Scott Thomas will live on. ●

#### RECOGNIZING LINKS, INC.

● Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, today I recognize the North Jersey Chapter of the Links, Inc.'s Linkages to Life Program, and honor the program participants for their hard work and dedication to raising awareness about the importance of blood, tissue, marrow, and organ donation among minority communities.

Each year, for the past 5 years, Links, Inc., in collaboration with Roche Pharmaceutical Company, conducted the Linkages to Life Program to help save lives by educating individuals of African descent about blood, tissue, marrow, and organ donation. With the help of a publication called Can We Talk? they were able to reach a large number of individuals, and educate them about how they can help save lives by being a volunteer donor. More specifically, the North Jersey Chapter provided important education services to individuals and families in Essex, Hudson, Bergen, and Passaic Counties.

Today, approximately 93,000 people are awaiting transplant surgery, and 25 percent of the people awaiting transplants are of African descent. In New Jersey, there are close to 3,000 individuals awaiting an organ transplant. Since organs are matched by a number of factors, including blood and tissue